

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

### RECOGNIZING UNION FIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP, PENNSYLVANIA ON THEIR 100TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. JIM GERLACH**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 16, 2003*

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize members of the Union Fire Association on the 100th Anniversary of their company's founding.

Ever since its establishment 100 years ago, the Union Fire Association has been an important member of Lower Merion Township. As the community has grown and prospered over the years, so has the Fire Association which now is one of the finest and well-equipped in the region.

The volunteers of this fine company deserve all the support that we may offer. They serve selflessly and tirelessly in order to protect their fellow citizens and, in the times of uncertainty we face today, their heroics are immeasurable. They are citizens just like you and I—teachers, students, doctors, lawyers, electricians, engineers, police officers. The list goes on and on—all willing to make sacrifices to ensure public safety. Before a member of this Company even sets foot into their first fire, they must undergo hours of training and, once completed, the education continues with advanced classes to learn vehicle rescue, fire-fighter rescue, pump operations and so on. As a service to the community, they put on demonstrations that educate us on how to stay safe in emergency situations. They are an irreplaceable and integral part of our community, whether it is raising money for a cause, adding to the joy of a local parade or hosting meetings and social functions. Clearly, the members of the Union Fire Association have served proudly and I rise today to recognize their service over the past 100 years.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing the Union Fire Association on their 100th Anniversary and salute, admire and appreciate all the volunteers that have served this community for so many years.

### RECOGNIZING MRS. CARMEN VEGA

**HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 16, 2003*

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to praise the achievements of Mrs. Carmen Vega, a paradigm of expertise in social work and education. Assistant Principal to the Long Branch High School and Middle School, Mrs. Vega has demonstrated outstanding versatility in various roles of leadership and mentorship. She proves an honorable recipient of the Latino American Committee of Monmouth County Annual Award, not solely for her work

in the Long Branch public school network, but for numerous other experiences in helping the counties of Monmouth and Ocean excel as dynamic and thriving communities.

A native of Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Mrs. Vega was raised in Long Branch, where she earned a Master's degree in Latino bilingual/bi-cultural issues from Rutgers University. More recently, she completed a Masters of Arts in Urban Education, also from Rutgers University. Her academic accolades provided her the honor as a licensed clinical social worker in the State of New Jersey.

Mrs. Vega's experience in advocacy and counseling, coupled with the framework of the Monmouth County Division of Social Services under which she worked, provided her with the skills to transform the outlooks and goals of many psychiatric patients. She was an engaging coordinator of a pre-discharge transitional program at Marlboro Psychiatric Hospital in Monmouth County, as well as a counselor to individuals and families throughout Ocean County. Mrs. Vega never forgot the importance of helping the psychiatrically handicapped, giving importance to their families and their friends as well. With a diverse background such as this, it is no wonder that in 1997, the Monmouth County Urban League honored Mrs. Vega with the Individual Equal Opportunity Award.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate Mrs. Vega for her dedication to the Monmouth and Ocean county communities. She exemplifies the ideals and aspirations of many dedicated and charitable citizens, as well as youth across all cultures. I ask that my colleagues rise and join me in honoring the distinguished Mrs. Carmen Vega.

### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. MARY BONO**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 16, 2003*

Mrs. BONO. Mr. Speaker, due to a medical emergency in my family, I was unable to cast my vote for two very important pieces of legislation considered the week of October 6, 2003.

Had I been present, I would have voted for H.R. 2998 (rollcall No. 537), a bill to exempt certain members of the Armed Forces from the requirement to pay subsistence charges while hospitalized. I believe it is abhorrent that this practice has been allowed to continue for so long and am pleased the House has acted to amend this law. The least we can do for the brave men and women who were hospitalized because they served our nation and were wounded, is to not charge them for food.

In addition, I would also have voted for H.R. 2997 (rollcall No. 536), the "Veterans Benefits Act." Amongst many other provisions, this bill makes permanent the eligibility of certain former members of the Selected Reserve for veterans' housing loans and provides that the

remarriage of a surviving spouse of a veteran after age 55 should not bar the payment of veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation.

Also, on Wednesday, October 15, I was unable to show my support for H.R. 1828 (rollcall No. 543), the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Act. Holding these nations accountable for their actions will only ensure a more stable environment in the Middle East.

Again, I am pleased the House took such decisive action on all these bills and I look forward to them moving swiftly through the legislative process.

### NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH WEEK

**HON. DANNY K. DAVIS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 16, 2003*

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the 57th year of the National School Lunch Program, which is dedicated to the health and well being of our Nation's children. National School Lunch Week commenced on October 13 and will run until October 17th. The National School Lunch Program has been joined through the years by several excellent child-feeding programs, such as: School Breakfast, Food Stamp, Child and Adult Care, Emergency Food Assistance and Summer Nutrition Programs, among others, and there is definitely a need to continue these programs in order to inspire nutrition education and awareness in our children.

President Harry S. Truman signed the National School Lunch Act on June 4, 1946, which authorized the National School Lunch Program, which is the oldest and largest of child nutrition programs. The legislation came in response to claims that many American men had been rejected for World War II military service because of diet-related health problems. The Federally assisted meal program was established as "a measure of national security, to safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation's children and to encourage the domestic consumption of nutritious agricultural commodities." To continue the spirit of the program, in 1998, Congress expanded the National School Lunch Program to include reimbursement for snacks served to children in after school educational and enrichment programs for children through the age of 18.

In this day and age, we are even more focused on providing nutritious, well-balanced, low-cost or free meals for our young boys and girls. The Program contributes to the development of healthy eating habits by providing the children with no more than 30 percent calories from fat, and less than 10 percent from saturated fat. All children can take advantage of this program, but if the child comes from a family with an income at or below 130 percent of the poverty level, that child is eligible for free meals. With about 57 percent of children

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